

## Relevancy of Kolb's Experiential Learning and Bushe's Theory of Change Models

From AVP-Research listserv – July-August 2016

On Sun, Jul 31, 2016 at 10:19 PM, Jack Willis <[jawillis.nfm@gmail.com](mailto:jawillis.nfm@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Has anyone ever noticed how David Kolb's model of experiential learning or Gervase Bushe's dialogic change model could be applied to an explanation of AVP effects?  
Has anyone ever done so?

These two models occurred to me recently as I was part of facilitators presenting a mini-AVP workshop at social-emotional-learning (SEL) conference for educators and social workers. Thinking that participants (being school or agency personnel) may want— or is it, need?— a rational © behind Ad AVP in case they would propose having an AVP workshop for their organization. At the end of the workshop I presented these two models. They seemed to work.

Kolb and colleague developed his learning model sometime in the 1970s as I recall. At least that's when I was first exposed to it in the context of service-learning. Learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Kolb's model is a four-stage learning spiral that shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences. The first stage, concrete experience, is where the learner actively experiences an activity. The second stage, reflective observation, is when the learner consciously reflects back on that experience. The third stage, abstract conceptualization, is where the learner attempts to conceptualize a theory or model of what is observed. The fourth stage, active experimentation, is where the learner is trying to plan how to test a model or theory or plan for a forthcoming experience. It is one of the most popular models of experiential learning.

Don't we do the same thing in our three-day workshops: activities, debriefings, next activities culminating in role play.

I've attached a graph of his model

Bushe's model is also comprised of four elements with a fifth element, called a generative image disrupting the pattern of our habitual acting behaviors. Here AVP plays the part of the generative image.

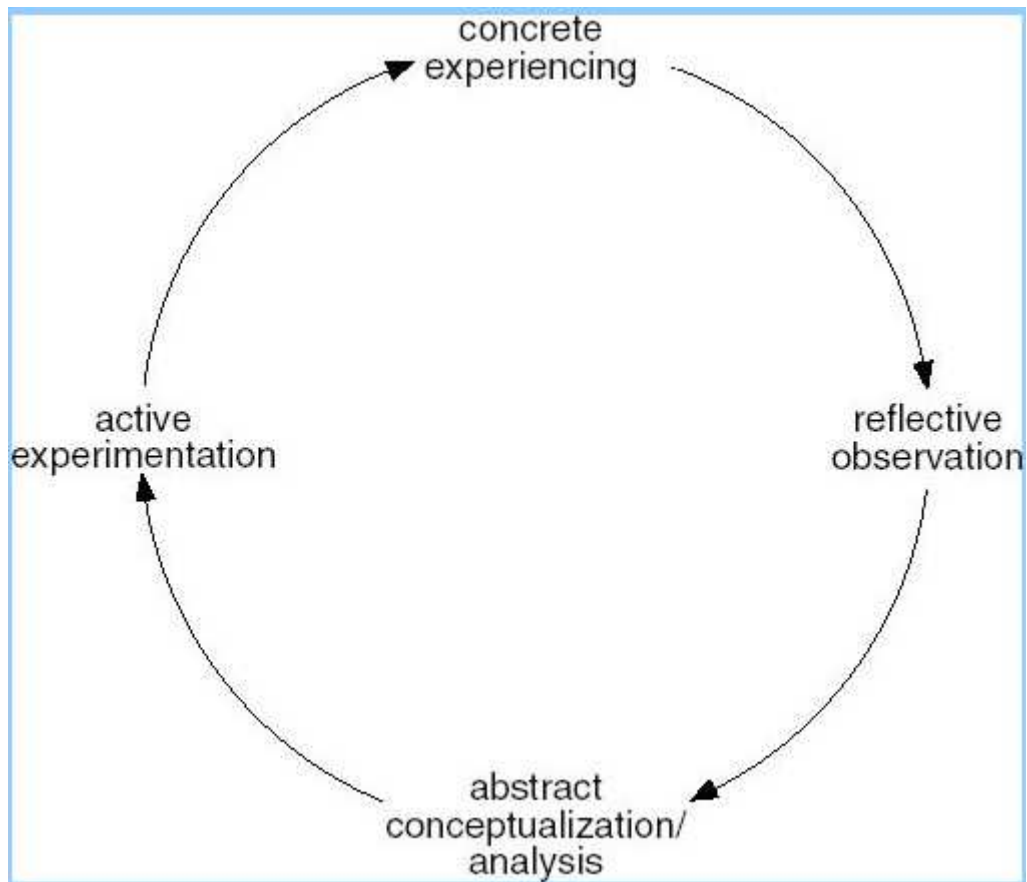
The change sequence, shown in the second attachment, assumes that the decisions and actions we take are based on what we think. Over time as we witness our own and other's decisions and actions, we develop shared attitudes and assumptions. These become taken for granted and form the culture, which in turn shapes what we think. A generative image disrupts this pattern both by altering what we think, and by motivating new decisions and actions.

AVP is a most powerful generative images which changes the core narratives in the community—the stories we tell ourselves about who we are, what we care about, and what is possible.

<kolb learning cycle.jpg><dialogic theory of change.jpg>

Jack Willis

[jawillis.nfm@gmail.com](mailto:jawillis.nfm@gmail.com)



.....

.....

Jack Willis

[jawillis.nfm@gmail.com](mailto:jawillis.nfm@gmail.com)

<kolb learning cycle.jpg><dialogic theory of change.jpg>

On Jul 31, 2016, at 9:23 PM, Chaundra Whitehead <[mschaundra@gmail.com](mailto:mschaundra@gmail.com)> wrote:

I am using Kolbs in my dissertation on AVP workshops, related to the experiential learning component, along with social learning theory. There will be more to come from me on this :)

Chaundra

On 1 Aug 2016, at 12:34 pm, Jack Willis <[jawillis.nfm@gmail.com](mailto:jawillis.nfm@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Chaundra. I think you are working on something that would make explicit the underpinnings of AVP workshop effectiveness. Wow.

On Sunday, July 31, 2016 9:15 PM, heather millhouse <[heatheravpq11@optusnet.com.au](mailto:heatheravpq11@optusnet.com.au)> wrote:  
hi,

I have just finished a 3 day prison workshop, and Im full in the heart from that, but today I must prepare materials for my day-job, teaching teachers at Uni. One of the courses I teach into is Educational Psychology - we call it Learning, Mind and Education (LME).

These emails interest me because in LME, when we look at co-operation, we use Kolb to talk about experiential learning in tandem with Nel Noddings Care Theory and Johnson & Johnson's Interdependance work for co-operative learning. We use Social Learning Theory (SLT) aka social cognition, from Bandura, and Socio-cultural Learning Theory (SCLT) from Vygotsky as more core learning theories because of their focus on cognition as well as social contexts.

My first thoughts on reading these emails is that no matter which theoretical perspective we take, what happens in AVP is not adequately explained in terms of the 'heart-felt' stuff we do. The other thought I have is that learning theories are constantly critiqued for their adequacy, validity, reliability, rigour etc. We are now in a place in this field where the 'Learning Styles' materials are no longer considered justified because they lack reliability and rigour and Kolb is critiqued for its lack of replicability across different contexts, its rigour and lack of details.

It seems to me that there are not yet adequate theoretical approaches that can be used to explain what happens in AVP work. Self determination theory (Deci&Ryan?) is crucial but it goes nowhere near the heart of AVP work. Self-regulation theory is useful for explaining why AVP is valuable, but it is nowhere near adequate.

As a way of working, all these theories have something to do with AVP workshop processes, but they are not enough. 33It is the spirit that is just not yet/ever systematised inside the psychological discourse so as to constitute theory. That makes me feel happy, not sure why.  
hh

Date: Mon, 1 Aug 2016 14:24:53 +0000 (UTC)  
From: "'Judith Litke' via AVP International Research" <research@avp.international>  
Reply-To: research@avp.international  
To: "research@avp.international" <research@avp.international>  
Subject: Re: [AVP-I Research] Relevancy of Kolb's experiential learning &  
Bushe's theory of change models

I so appreciate this dialogue and have been thinking on these things for a couple decades, beginning with a Psychology of Adult Learning course I happened to be taking around the same time as my early years in AVP. Jack Mezirow's theory was the foundation for that course. At the time students were encouraged to critique his theory and the part his framework I thought to have gap - was the role emotion plays in transformative learning. Recently, I read third edition *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, Susan B. Merriam, Rosemary S. Caffarella, and Lisa M. Baumgartner, 2007, John Wiley and Sons Inc. I was often noting to myself "AVP" - seeing as you say links to many theories, but no one theory other than transformative learning in general, could I say, "this captures AVP totally". And I can understand the feeling of happiness at this realization. All the same, I know I will likely continue to search for rationales that could briefly sort of capture the theory of what happens when (as for me I felt 'struck' in my first basic workshop by realization I had so much learning to do about becoming a nonviolent person, when all along previously I had never a thought I was violent in any way). If I hadn't been impacted emotionally and deep in my soul, or all through the years feeling 'full in the heart' at every workshop since, seeing new angles, new facets of needed learning for myself - well, I think AVP and I would have 'passed in the night'. Seems kind of natural to look back and wonder, how does all this happen? (and I realize each person's journey will be unique, adding another complex dimension).

Judy